**“Even in our darkest moments,
there’s light where you least expect it.”**

~ Mirabel

PRODUCTION NOTES

Before the setting was chosen, before even a single character was imagined, the filmmakers behind Walt Disney Animation Studios’ all-new original feature film “Encanto” had decided what the heart of their new film would be: family. “Encanto” explores the compelling but complicated relationships within families. “We thought it would be amazing to tell a story about not just a pair of characters but a large extended family,” says director Byron Howard (Oscar®-winning director of “Zootopia,” “Tangled”). “We wanted to celebrate and try to understand how the complex dynamics in big families really work. How well do we know our families? How well do they know us?”

Adds director and screenwriter Jared Bush (co-director/co-writer “Zootopia,” writer “Moana”), “It’s a story about how the people who are closest to us, especially family members, don’t always see us—or fully understand us. And likewise, we don’t show people we love our whole selves for many reasons. Our story shows how one member of a family who feels the least seen can learn to see her whole family and ultimately herself.”

“Encanto” tells the tale of an extraordinary family, the Madrigals, who live hidden in the mountains of Colombia, in a magical house, in a vibrant town, in a wondrous, charmed place called an Encanto. The magic of the Encanto has blessed every child in the family with a unique gift from super strength to the power to heal—every child except one, Mirabel. But when she discovers that the magic surrounding the Encanto is in danger, Mirabel decides that she, the only ordinary Madrigal, might just be her exceptional family’s last hope.

According to Howard, each of the Madrigal children receive their gifts during a special ceremony. “As each child turns 5,” he says, “a door is produced in their house that opens to an enchanted space. It reveals their magical gift and therefore what their role will be in this family and how they’ll serve the community.”

Mirabel's middle sister, Luisa, for example, is strong and powerful—the rock of the family, with the gift of super strength that she uses to serve the community by relocating livestock, moving a building or rerouting a river. Isabela, Mirabel's oldest sister, is the golden child of the family, the perfect one who's been gifted with the ability to make plants grow and flowers bloom with every step she takes. Isabela's grace and beauty enchant everyone except Mirabel who struggles to relate to her seemingly perfect persona and charmed life.

"Mirabel is all of us," says Bush. "She is the ordinary member of her family among a bunch of extraordinary, magical people. Many of us can feel like we're surrounded by superstars in our lives—we can feel intimidated; we can suffer from imposter syndrome. It doesn't matter who you are or what you've achieved—there's always someone who's doing it bigger or better. Mirabel is that character we can all relate to."

For 10 years, Mirabel has put a smile on her face and accepted that for some reason, on her fifth birthday, she was not gifted with a magical power. Says co-director and screenwriter Charise Castro Smith (playwright "Feathers and Teeth," writer "The Haunting of Hill House"), "Mirabel is a people pleaser—she feels this need to compensate for the fact that she didn't get a gift. She's always told herself that she's OK with the dynamic in her family—but deep down, she's not. She really wants to make a change. Her journey is to recognize her own intrinsic value and find her place within this family."

According to producer Clark Spencer (Oscar®-winning producer "Zootopia," "Wreck-It Ralph," "Lilo & Stitch," and Walt Disney Animation Studios President), Mirabel's story actually began long ago when her grandparents, Alma and Pedro, were forced to flee their home with nothing but their newborn triplets. Following the tragic loss of her husband, Alma said a prayer to a candle in a moment of desperation. "The candle responded to her prayer giving Alma and those who followed safe shelter in a wondrous place called an Encanto," says Spencer. "Each generation of the Madrigals share their gifts with the entire community. And our story doesn't just have characters with magical powers; the magic surrounds them. The house comes alive and is there to help and protect the family. The house is a character within our story."

Magic abounds in "Encanto." "An 'Encanto' is a term sometimes used for a place of magic and heightened spirituality, where magical or extraordinary things can happen," says Castro Smith. "It's a place of natural wonder where the landscape is infused with magical possibility."

But, says Howard, it's not your everyday magic. "There's magic in the world, but it's grounded in reality," he says. "Magical realism, an inspiration for our film, is tied to real emotions, real events, and it's thoughtful and layered. It's not just an easy answer to your problems, it's actually a reflection of the experiences you have every day whether you're enjoying success or struggling."

Although many of the characters in "Encanto" have magical gifts, the filmmakers wanted to ground these gifts in reality. Says Bush, "Our goal was that these characters would be just as compelling if we were to tell the story of this family without any gifts—if there

were no magic in the world. We wanted to have extensions of family archetypes that we could all relate to whether it's the golden child, the rock of the family, the outcast or drama queen. We just crank it up a little and make it come to life in magical ways."

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE

Honoring Walt Disney Animation Studios' rich tradition of building stories through music and song, "Encanto" features eight original songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and composing the score for "Encanto" is Germaine Franco ("Dora and the Lost City of Gold," "Little," "Tag"), who co-wrote songs including "Un Poco Loco" and "Proud Corazón" for Disney and Pixar's "Coco."

Miranda is the creator and original star of Broadway's "Hamilton," which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Drama, earned 16 Tony® nominations, winning 11, and 12 Emmy® nominations this year for its Disney+ run, winning 2. The Original Broadway Cast Recording of "Hamilton" won the 2016 GRAMMY® for best musical theater album. His work on Disney Animation's "Moana" earned him a GRAMMY for best song written for visual media, and an Oscar® nomination for best achievement in music written for motion pictures – original song ("How Far I'll Go"). In 2021, the "Moana" soundtrack broke a Billboard Soundtrack chart record for the amount of time spent at number one.

Howard and Bush, who previously teamed up on Disney Animation's 2016 Oscar®-winning feature film "Zootopia," had hoped to team up on another film—but not just any film. "After 'Zootopia,' we were keen on doing a musical," says Howard. "We're musicians—we grew up that way. Jared had just come off 'Moana' and had a great experience working with Lin-Manuel, I'd enjoyed directing 'Tangled,' so the three of us started talking about working together."

For Miranda, joining a film at the ground level was particularly appealing, but it was the idea that really drew him in. "It really began with family," says Miranda. "The notion of a family musical that gets to the complexity and interconnectedness of families was really interesting. In the beginning, we told a lot of personal stories—one of the ongoing themes was how we all cast our family members in certain roles. How do those roles change over time? How do they stay the same?"

Diving into the music of the Colombia-set story proved exciting. "A lot of the rhythms are familiar to me, but the instrumentation and orchestration is different and often unique to Colombia," says Miranda. "One of the most fun things is that the accordion is so central to the music. It was really a joy immersing myself in artists I didn't know, and doing deeper dives into those I've grown up loving—like Carlos Vives, who we're lucky enough to work with on this movie. This entire process has been about falling in love with Colombian music and culture and getting to play in that space."

CALLING COLOMBIA HOME

Set in Colombia, the film embraces the diversity, culture, people and, of course, the music. The location, says Bush, was wholly driven by story. "Early on we knew that we wanted to tell a story about a large extended family with themes of perception and perspective," says Bush. "So much of Latin America is a combination of Indigenous,

African and European heritage. Colombia is considered a ‘crossroads of Latin America’—and we wanted to reflect that within one family, the Madrigals.”

Howard, Bush and Miranda—along with Lin-Manuel’s father, Luis, and executive music producer Tom MacDougall—traveled to Colombia in 2018 to explore and soak up the surroundings. Says Howard, “It was a surprise at every turn. Every city, every place was vastly different and incredibly beautiful—Cartagena, Bogotá, Barichara and San Basilio de Palenque—there’s a feeling of magic in many of these places. And it’s a different kind of magic than we’ve seen in our films. The visit to Colombia and the opportunity to be welcomed by so many we met there was really a revelation, and inspired so much in our story.”

According to producer Yvett Merino (production manager “Moana,” “Big Hero 6”), the look of the film embraces the vibrancy, vitality and sincerity the filmmakers found within the Colombian community. “We hope that we’ve aptly conveyed the beauty of Colombia—from the Cocora Valley to the Coffee Region (Eje Cafetero) to the rain forests,” she says. “Most importantly, we hope our movie reflects the beauty of the people of Colombia.”

Filmmakers were keen to create a backdrop for Mirabel’s story that was deeply inspired by Colombia. Says Merino, “We sought experts in Colombian culture, anthropology, costume design, botany, music, language and architecture, to name a few—talking with them for hours about everything from native plants to the way houses would’ve been built at that time in that region,” says Merino. “Once we started focusing on Colombia, we knew we wanted to aptly represent the area and the extraordinary culture. And the key to that would be building our Colombian Cultural Trust—a group of experts who lent their knowledge to the production about big details and small ones—from the right way to grill corn to the smallest detail of everyday life.”

Among those consultants are Juan Rendon and Natalie Osma, documentary filmmakers who met Howard, Bush and Spencer while working on a behind-the-scenes project for “Zootopia.” The pair, who are both Colombian, were fast fans of the idea to set “Encanto” in their native country. “We love Colombia,” says Rendon. “The topography—three mountain ranges separated by valleys, plus two big rivers—created very distinct populations at the turn of the 20th century with very specific cultural identities that are still relevant today. There are people from the mountains, the coasts, the plains—each comes with certain characteristics, generally speaking, like a tendency to be outside and social on the northern coast where it’s super hot.”

Adds Osma, “It’s not rare to find a house with multiple generations. There are benefits to having the support of family members.”

Osma and Rendon accompanied the filmmakers on their research trip, helping to visit the various regions, and introducing them to many of the people who would go on to become consultants alongside them throughout production. “We’ve seen every screening since the first one,” says Osma. “We meet with them every week, send reference materials about everything from big ideas to simple things like gestures—how a character might move his hands. We do a lot of research.”

Familia, a group of Latinx Disney employees within Walt Disney Animation Studios, was also assembled to share personal perspectives and experiences to help shape the film.

GIVING VOICE

Filmmakers called on Stephanie Beatriz to provide the voice of Mirabel, an ordinary 15-year-old who's struggling to find her place in her family. The voice cast also includes María Cecilia Botero as Mirabel's grandmother Alma aka Abuela; Angie Cepeda and Wilmer Valderrama as Mirabel's parents, Julieta and Agustín; Diane Guererro and Jessica Darrow as Mirabel's sisters, Isabela and Luisa; Carolina Gaitán and Mauro Castillo as Mirabel's aunt and uncle, Pepa and Félix; and Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz and Ravi Cabot-Conyers as Mirabel's cousins Dolores, Camilo and Antonio, respectively. John Leguizamo lends his voice to Bruno, Mirabel's estranged uncle, and Maluma voices town heartthrob Mariano, the soon-to-be fiancé of Mirabel's perfect and poised sister Isabela. Alan Tudyk plays the toucan, and both Carlos Vives and Sebastián Yatra lend their voices to songs within the film.

Opening Nov. 24, 2021, Walt Disney Animation Studios' 60th feature film is directed by Jared Bush and Byron Howard, co-directed by Charise Castro Smith and produced by Yvett Merino, p.g.a., and Clark Spencer, p.g.a. Castro Smith and Bush are screenwriters on the film. Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote and co-produced eight original songs for the film, Mike Elizondo is co-producer of the songs, and Germaine Franco composed the original score for "Encanto."

MEET THE MADRIGALS
"How Well Do We Know Our Families? How Well Do They Know Us?"

Filmmakers knew from the get-go that their story would be about family, and they quickly focused on the role perspective plays in family dynamics. Director Jared Bush says he didn't realize until well into adulthood that he and his older sister had vastly different experiences growing up. "She was the first," he says. "She felt pressured to continue gymnastics even though she wanted to pursue something different. But when I came along, my parents said, 'Follow your dreams!' I had a hard time reconciling that she was parented differently than I was until I realized it's true now with my own three kids—only I'm the parent."

Adds director Byron Howard, "You can live with your parents, your brothers and sisters, and still not know what they go through. You don't know all of their failures. You don't know those things they don't talk about. What are the family secrets that no one shares? That was fascinating to us."

Introducing audiences to the Madrigals, of course, had to be done with the vibrancy and magic "Encanto" promised. Enter Lin-Manuel Miranda and the first of the eight songs he wrote for the film, "Family Madrigal." "One of the things I learned on 'Moana' was to raise my hand and say, 'Ooh, ooh—we should tell this part of the story through song!'" says Miranda. "Given how complex this family is, I realized our first song needs to

introduce our main character, Mirabel, in a way that makes us fall in love with her, and understand the dynamics within this large family."

Inspired by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken's song "Belle" from Disney Animation's 1991 classic "Beauty and the Beast," Miranda wrote a song designed to introduce not only Mirabel, but also the rest of the Madrigal family members. "The fun was finding a song that could hold all of that information across three generations," says Miranda. "Then it becomes a puzzle to put together, as Stephen Sondheim might say. We start with Abuela and work through each generation."

According to head of story Jason Hand, the song sets the pace for the story. "It's upbeat from the get-go," says Hand. "We were worried that the accordion player would keel over, it goes so fast. He was amazing.

"In a very short period of time, the song not only introduces each character, it shares their individual gifts in a fun and playful way," continues Hand. "We brainstormed what would be the fastest read visually for each character's gift. Luisa, for example, is picking up a bridge, so we know she's super strong right away. The song has a big wrap-up that reveals that Mirabel doesn't have a gift—and does it in a funny way that's also a little heartbreaking."

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE CHARACTERS

Head of story Nancy Kruse says that choosing the powers for the Madrigal children didn't begin with magic at all. "We thought more about family roles than gifts," she says. "Families tend to be made up of wide-ranging personalities—the perfect one, the strong one, the quiet one, the gossip. We tried to think of gifts that were reflective of those family roles."

Filmmakers looked to their own families, as well as those they met in Colombia to pull together the diverse personalities that make up the Madrigals. "The directors really wanted to portray the fun and craziness of a big family living together in one house," says William Schwab, art director characters. "Our characters reflect the diversity of Colombia and how different cultures intermingle in a unique way. Colombia is a country that really celebrates its diversity."

The Colombian Cultural Trust was instrumental in helping filmmakers add specific details that helped define the film's culture and locale. Says head of animation Kira Lehtomaki, "The consultants were our eyes—making sure we were being as true and authentic to the people of Colombia as we could be. We delved into things like hand gestures, for example, for both main characters and those in the background. Gestures are like languages—they are very specific.

"For example," continues Lehtomaki, "we learned that many people in that part of the world will point with their lips—not a finger or hand, but their lips. When we see Mirabel under the bed with Antonio—she gives him a little present and they're talking a bit. She gestures for him to open it by pointing to it with her lips. Those actions are clear to everyone, but I hope the Colombian audience will recognize those kinds of details."

THE RIGHT LOOK

Before animation even begins, however, artists must first create the characters, beginning with only their imaginations. Every detail must come together, including everything from a character's height and body shape to their hair and costume. According to associate production designer Lorelay Bové, artists responsible for designing the characters were not seeking perfection. "We wanted to create an organic look," she says. "If you look closely, you can see that the embroidery on the costumes looks like someone did it by hand."

With a key-character count of more than a dozen, Bové used color to help differentiate the smaller family units within the large extended family. Julieta, Agustín and their three daughters embrace cool tones, while Pepa, Félix and their three children are dressed in warmer colors.

The number of key characters—the most ever for a Walt Disney Animation Studios feature—also called for advances in the technology used to realize them. Visual effects supervisor Scott Kersavage and his team spearheaded those efforts. "Usually, we have a handful of main characters—three or four," he says. "It was a huge effort to have the full family on screen—each one built to maximum performance capability so that they can move and emote correctly. They all have layered, complex outfits considering the time period the story takes place, and the hair and skin tones in the film are varied and complex too, reflecting the cultural diversity we wanted to represent in the film."

THE EYES HAVE IT

They say one's eyes are the window to the soul—which may explain why Disney Animation artists dating back to Walt Disney himself have dedicated time and resources in an effort to create believable eyes that help characters convey emotions. Says Alessandro Jacomini, director of cinematography lighting, "I've been at Disney for 23 years, and eyes have always been a subject of discussion for study and research. We made a step forward in 'Encanto,' creating something that is more realistic, while preserving elements that are extremely appealing from the stylistic standpoint. Speckled highlights give life to the eyes. We can also see a little bit more of the anatomy of the eye—the lensing—but it's done really carefully."

DRESSED TO IMPRESS

Costuming characters in an animated film is not unlike doing so for live action. The characters in "Encanto" don garments designed to reflect the vibrancy of the film's Colombian setting. According to Nicholas Burkard, head of technical animation, the filmmakers' vision called for complexity across the board. "Usually in our films, you'll see one or two characters with complex clothing," he says. "In 'Encanto,' it's the whole family, plus the village full of people. They all have multiple layers of clothing."

All of those layers must move with the characters, of course, adding yet another challenge—especially in song sequences. "The garments—each layer of each garment has to move correctly with the beat of the song," says Burkard. "Each piece needs to

carry the rhythm of the characters or else the choreography won't look right. The clothes and hair need to be as expressive as the characters."

According to Burkard, tech anim 2D lead Alex Kupershmidt—who was the supervising animator for the hyenas in 1994's "The Lion King" and Stitch in 2002's "Lilo & Stitch"—did two-dimensional draw-overs for several sequences to help guide the team. "Attendance at those dailies would be huge, even if people weren't presenting—they just want to see Alex's draw-overs," says Burkard.

CHARACTER LINEUP

ABUELA ALMA is the matriarch of the Madrigal family. Her steadfast determination and unwavering hope led her to the magical Encanto, where she raised triplets Julieta, Pepa

and Bruno. To her surprise and delight, each of her children was blessed with a magical gift upon their fifth birthday, and the tradition continued with each of their children—except for Mirabel. Abuela values the gifts given to each of her family members, ensuring that they are used to benefit and protect their community, and to honor the sacrifice of Abuelo Pedro.

According to director Jared Bush, however, the gifts—while provided by the magic of the Encanto in the story—are a symbol of a reality everyone can relate to. “Families tend to pigeonhole people very quickly,” he says. “By the time you’re 5, you’re an athlete, a musician or a mathematician—and it sticks forever.”

María Cecilia Botero (“Enfermeras,” “Her Mother’s Killer,” “Undercover Law”) lends her voice to Abuela Alma. “She beautifully balances the warmth and strictness of Abuela,” says producer Yvett Merino. “She reminds me of my own grandmother—there were times in the recording studio when I thought, ‘That sounds familiar.’”

William Schwab, art director characters, worked on Abuela’s character design. “We really wanted her to feel grounded,” he says. “We wanted a gravity to her. There’s a lot of weight on her shoulders, and yet she pushes through.”

Artists kept that gravity in mind when dressing the character. “Her costume is heavy, intense,” says associate production designer Lorelay Bové. “She’s a traditional lady. She often wears a black shawl that represents the loss of her husband. When she takes it off, however, she feels a little lighter—more vulnerable.”

Adds head of animation Kira Lehtomaki, “Abuela is emotionally complicated. She puts on a façade for her family. She is very reserved—keeping everything bottled up.”

Animators had a key mantra when it came to Abuela. “Less is more,” Lehtomaki says. “She moves less than the other characters—she has stoic poses and expressions because there’s so much that she doesn’t want to reveal.”

Lehtomaki adds that the style of animation for every character was generally subtle—but Abuela was perhaps the most subtle, to convey her reserved personality as well as her age. “If Abuela is dancing, she isn’t as nimble as the other characters,” says Lehtomaki. “Her gestures wouldn’t be as big.”

Consultants and cultural experts shared stories about family gatherings in Colombia, suggesting the whole family would take part in dances like the one featured in the film. In fact, animation reference consultant Kai Martinez suggested specific choreography for Abuela. “I know for my grandmothers, it was a time where they could let go a bit of the weight they carried from leading our family. I would literally watch them relax their shoulders, laugh and have a good time with all of us. They would be in their own world at times dancing like us but a bit slower, a bit more contained.”

JULIETA & AGUSTÍN are parents to three daughters, Isabela, Luisa and Mirabel. Julieta, one of Alma’s triplets, was blessed with the power to heal. Radiating warmth

and kindness, Julieta wields no magic wand, however. Her magic is found in the food she lovingly prepares for all who need it. “Growing up,” says Bush, “my mom was very nurturing. She definitely healed us through her food.”

According to head of story Nancy Kruse, Julieta’s relationship with Mirabel is—like many mothers and daughters—a little complicated. “I think Julieta is very affectionate and supportive,” says Kruse. “But she doesn’t 100 percent understand what Mirabel is going through. She wants to maintain their connection, but Julieta received a gift and Mirabel did not.”

Angie Cepeda (“A Night in Old Mexico,” “Love in the Time of Cholera”) provides the voice of the nurturing mother. “Julieta loves cooking for the people she loves, and so do I,” says Cepeda. “She also reminds me of my mother—how loving and understanding she was. To me, family is everything.”

Cepeda was particularly excited to take part in a film set in Colombia. “It feels special to be part of a story that is inspired in my country,” she says. “A story full of love and magical realism. Colombia is all that, and everybody should know.”

Casting director Jamie Roberts had that very sentiment top of mind. “The fact that we were creating a film with the backdrop of Colombia—and that it was being celebrated in such a beautiful way—really played a role in the casting process,” says Roberts. “That really appealed to all of our cast members, but especially our talent like Angie, who have a personal connection to Colombia.”

Julieta’s husband, Agustín, is somewhat a fish out of water, having married into the magical family. Awkward and accident-prone, Agustín always has the best intentions—especially when it comes to his daughters. “We imagined he was from Bogotá,” says Bill Schwab, art director characters. “We did a lot of research and worked with the consultants who suggested he might be more buttoned-up and formal. He’s a great father—a little quirky in his three-piece suit. He carries a bit of each of his daughters with him—a flower for Isabela, and each of his socks has a different print that pulls from Mirabel and Luisa’s costumes.”

Wilmer Valderrama (CBS’ “NCIS,” “Onward”) voices Agustín. “Wilmer is a new dad,” says Roberts. “And now he gets to play a dad in ‘Encanto,’ which is awesome. Agustín really relates to Mirabel and her feeling like an outsider sometimes. Wilmer was really able to convey the character’s genuine compassion for his daughter.”

Valderrama had a personal connection to the film—a few, actually. “To start,” he says, “the Latino community is having a really exciting moment right now, and this film is an amazing opportunity for us to share our joy and culture with the world. Personally, my mother is Colombian, and she has never seen her country portrayed as the magical place that it is. I’m also so excited for my daughter to see herself in an adventure that is rooted in her heritage, one that I hope will inspire her to carry this torch and continue to show the world that we all have more in common than we think.”

The actor stepped easily into the character's shoes—thinking of his dad, as well as his newfound role of dad himself. "When I think about my own father, I think about the many ways he has instilled our heritage and culture into my life," Valderrama says. "As a father myself, I am now constantly thinking about how I can do the same with my own daughter. While she is still so young, life can be so wonderful and worth living, so it's also important to me that she knows she can be anything and anyone she wants to be."

MIRABEL is the only child in her extraordinary family who wasn't blessed with a magical gift. She's determined to prove that she belongs—denying to everyone, including herself, that she feels all alone, even in her own house.

"In her family, worth is tied to gifts," says director Jared Bush. "What Mirabel wants more than anything is to truly matter to her family—especially Abuela."

According to director Byron Howard, Mirabel has a complicated relationship with her grandmother. "When the movie begins, they are as close as can be," he says. "It's important to understand how much they truly adore each other. There's a special connection between them. But when Mirabel turns 5 and walks up the stairs to her door to learn what gift is in store for her—only to get nothing—they're both left adrift. Neither knows how to deal with it."

Still, there's something very special about Mirabel—her family just hasn't figured out what that is just yet. Filmmakers wanted to convey that with subtle clues, both in the way she interacts with her family and in how she looks. Associate production designer Lorelay Bové designed an embroidered top for the character featuring butterfly iconography. "The butterfly is important in Colombia," says Bové of the butterfly. "There's an otherworldly quality about butterflies—and their wings represent a bit of magic that is directly linked to the candle that originally brought the miracle to the family."

Stephanie Beatriz ("Brooklyn Nine-Nine," "In the Heights") voices Mirabel. "Stephanie is perfect," says co-director Charise Castro Smith. "We couldn't have cast anybody better. She came to us with Mirabel's humor, her vulnerability and openheartedness. She brings so much charm to the character."

According to Beatriz, portraying the character came naturally. "Mirabel reminds me of myself at her age—headstrong yet unsure, full of wonder and imagination but sometimes held back by self-doubt," says Beatriz. "She's funny, awkward and brave. She's also very much a classic Disney heroine, and yet she's a new iteration of that classic. Plus—the glasses!"

The glasses are more than a fun accessory. Says Bové, the round green specs are very much a part of the storytelling. "One of the film's themes is perspective—how two people can view the same situation completely differently, and how those different points of view can affect their relationship."

For Beatriz, it's that in-depth approach that most appealed to her. "Disney has truly perfected the art of storytelling," she says. "There's a lot of care and beauty with which they tell these incredible stories—from the research to the story development to the brilliant animation and collective beautiful energy that goes into making a Disney animated film. It's a collective of artists working diligently with every ounce of their talent to put something special and beautiful into the world. I'm honored to have been a part of the legacy of Disney Animation. It's a dream come true."

ISABELA is pretty much perfect, with an abundance of grace and poise—not to mention a magical ability to make plants grow and flowers bloom. "Isabela is the perfect golden child," says producer Clark Spencer. "Lots of families have that child who is absolutely perfect. But as a result, they're left feeling they can't be anything else but perfect. You aren't allowed to get less than an A on the test, or come in second in the race, or have one hair out of place."

Illustrating this internal conflict is the song "What Else Can I Do?" Songwriter Lin-Manuel Miranda says the song's rock roots perfectly suited the not-so-perfect character. "This is a '90s rock jam," he says. "I really wanted it to feel like the rock en español movement. I could just imagine this pageant-like young woman rocking out as she reveals her secrets."

According to Erin Ramos, head of effects animation, the song called for an abundance of blooms. "There's an enormous display of flowers," she says. "We listened to the beats of the music to add little flourishes, or punch up a cymbal crash."

Nathan Detroit Warner, director of cinematography layout, says that Isabela's arc in "Encanto" inspired his team to support the storytelling with creative camera movement and lens choices. "Isabela's perfect 'golden child' image called for an 85mm portrait lens, as well as a 105mm lens that adds a softness to the image," says Warner. "We approached camera for Isabela like we might approach it for a classic Disney heroine—it's a quick read. But when she opens up to Mirabel, we wanted to do something different. We actually went all the way back to references from 'Tarzan' and used that kind of energy—changing our approach to the character to more of an action moment."

Diane Guerrero ("Doom Patrol," "Orange Is the New Black") was called on to voice Isabela. "She was able to bring what the audience might expect of the 'princess' of the family," says Spencer, "but also deliver the complexities of having to be perfect all of the time in a relatable way we can all understand."

Guerrero can relate to both aspects of the character. "Much like Isabela, in my early life I thrived off of the family role of being the perfect girl," she says. "Later, I learned there's more beauty in imperfection, because only then can we be our full selves—curious and discovering what truly makes us special within.

"I wanted to be in 'Encanto' because of the wonderful message of self-acceptance," Guerrero continues. "This message is one I feel proud to bring to families all over the world—especially through the lens of Colombian culture and magic. It takes time to

discover your power and personal truth, and if you are lucky, you get to do that with the ones you love most. And if you don't already have those loved ones, you get to create those connections along the way."

LUISA, hardworking and determined, was given the gift of super strength. She is the go-to person for all of the heavy lifting. The character, therefore, had to look the part. According to associate production designer Lorelay Bové, artists were inspired by world-class athletes. "We looked at bodybuilders, weightlifters, shot putters," she says. "Luisa is muscular and athletic."

Nicholas Burkard, head of technical animation, and his team were responsible for ensuring that Luisa's muscles looked and moved appropriately—particularly given the character's costume. "What simulation couldn't achieve, we'd go back and sculpt it to make sure her silhouette looked right."

Luisa's strong and confident look underscores her role in her family. Says co-director Charise Castro Smith, "She's the rock of the family. Everyone tends to lean on Luisa because they just assume she has it all under control."

But does she? Miranda penned a song entitled "Surface Pressure" that illustrates the challenges Luisa faces. "I think it's really tough to be an older sibling," he says. "You're paving the way. I watched my sister make all the mistakes that I would learn from just by being a few years younger. So this notion of pressure—I think that works whether you have a superpower or not."

The approach to cinematography underscores Luisa's struggle to meet impossible expectations. "At first, we wanted it to feel like she's a little farther away than she really is," says Nathan Warner, director of cinematography layout. "But when there's an intimate moment between Mirabel and Luisa, we shoot her with the same portrait lens we shot Isabela with."

Jessica Darrow ("Disney Television Discovers: Talent Showcase," "Feast of the Seven Fishes") was cast as the voice of Luisa. "She is able to bring Luisa's toughness and softness all in the same scene, which is pretty unique," says producer Yvett Merino of Darrow.

The actor sees herself in her character. "Luisa and I are the same because we are both tough crybabies," says Darrow. "Though I am nowhere near as buff as Luisa, her mental and emotional resilience is something that really resonates with me. I think we both share the same mentality of keeping calm on the outside and dealing with everything else, internally, on our own. Sometimes we'll just keep saying yes until the only other option is to either say no or cry by ourselves in a bush. Usually the latter is our go-to option. Luisa and I care deeply and would do anything for our people, especially our Abuelas."

Darrow is very clear about her reasons for taking part in the film. "Besides crossing 'become my own character in a Disney film' off my bucket list, I wanted to be a part of

‘Encanto’ because I was excited to tell one (of many) important stories in this film,” she says. “As a child, I always wished to meet Disney characters whose lives felt closer to mine. ‘Encanto’ beautifully encapsulates so many familiar feelings and cultural traditions I grew up with—I know it will resonate with Latinx/Latino audiences of all ages in the same way. Being given the chance to create a connection for someone who may not typically hear their stories in mainstream media feels amazing.”

PEPA & FÉLIX are Mirabel’s quirky aunt and fun-loving uncle, and are parents to Dolores, Camilo and Antonio. Pepa, one of Abuela Alma’s triplets, was gifted with the power to control the weather with her emotions. The forecast is often unpredictable, however, as Pepa’s emotions are far-reaching and ever-changing. “Pepa is so fun,” says Merino. “She’s that amazing emotional friend or aunt who’s all over the place.”

According to visual effects supervisor Scott Kersavage, Pepa’s gift called for special controls. “We wanted to give animators the ability to art direct her hair,” he says. “When her emotions create lightning, Pepa’s hair stands up as if it’s been electrified.”

The character’s unique power is often illustrated by a cloud that follows her around. Says David Hutchins, head of effects animation, “It’s very much based on physical simulations of real clouds. Given an understanding of how clouds form in nature, our team was able to create a stylized volume that follows Pepa around as her emotions go from one extreme to the other.”

“Pepa is such an amazing character,” says Carolina Gaitán (“Narcos,” “Sin Senos Sí Hay Paraíso”), who lends her voice to Pepa. “She is ultra-sensitive, frenetic and exhilarating. She is such a good mother but also a very particular one, and the best part is that she has the most amazing power ever. I really feel that I was the one who had to do it because I vibrate almost the same as her in so many ways. I feel people are going to enjoy her on the big screen.

“I’ve always dreamed about being part of a Disney movie, ever since I was a child,” continues Gaitán. “I also wanted to be part of a project that portrays Colombia as the magical place it always has been. I cannot be more happy and grateful for the opportunity Disney gave us to tell the entire world the beautiful, amazing and magical country that I am honored to be part of.”

Pepa’s husband, Félix, provides a grounding force for his deeply passionate wife—he’s easygoing and often the life of the party. Mauro Castillo is the voice of Félix. “He’s a popular singer in Colombia,” says Merino of the actor. “Félix is all about having a good time, and Mauro really knew how to bring him to life.”

Says Castillo,” Félix is such a positive character in the movie—the way he carries himself with every single member of the family—accepting them just as they are, especially his wife with her unexpected changes of mood. He is the soul of the parties—just like me—and this makes him a very fun character to be around.

“For me it’s such an honor to be in ‘Encanto,’” continues the actor. “It shows many aspects of our diverse Colombian and Latin culture that many people do not know about. I think this is a great way to show it.”

DOLORES is Mirabel’s cousin who’s usually the first to know the town’s biggest secrets, most compelling drama and juiciest revelations. She can’t help it: she was blessed with extraordinary hearing. Whisper if you will, but Dolores can still hear it. According to co-director Charise Castro Smith, Dolores is based on that member of many families who always has the scoop on everyone else. “She began as the family gossip and evolved from there,” she says. “We thought it would be funny if she was a very quiet and reserved person who happens to know everything.”

Dolores is voiced by Afro-Latina singer/actress Adassa, who has made high-profile singing collaborations with Pitbull, Snoop Dogg, Flo Rida and Luis Fonsi. “Adassa is so funny, and is an amazing singer,” says Castro Smith.

Adassa says she found the character compelling. “Dolores has irresistible charm,” she says. “I relate to her sweetness and eagerness to please; I think she’s hilarious! I love the fact that Dolores represents the beauty of the Afro-Latina with colorful flare. She can sing and rap—something I've done all of my life—yet she is soft-spoken. She has a big heart—always ready to help. But she has her own dreams that might never come true.”

Adassa adds that she wanted to take part in the film for very personal reasons. “To be part of the amazing cast that will forever represent Colombia in an animated film is a historic event,” she says. “I’m very proud of being Afro-Guajira! My family has been in Colombia since before Colombia was Colombia, and for an Afro-Latina like me to see my culture and family values represented in such a magical way is an absolute honor. As a mother of seven, I have the joy of watching Disney movies—it’s a tradition in our home. ‘The Little Mermaid’ planted the seed in my heart to become a singer. I love the idea of a big family living an adventure within the walls of their own home—something that lately, I’m VERY familiar with!

“They say a dream is a wish your heart makes,” Adassa continues. “I get to be part of a historic film where a Colombian family is showcased in such a delicate magical light exposing the diversity within our beautiful Latin culture.”

CAMILO was born to entertain. Throw in his magical gift that allows him to switch up his appearance to be whomever he wants to be in the moment, and he’s secured his place in the spotlight. Says head of story Nancy Kruse, “If someone needs an extra helping hand—someone tall or someone small or someone just like you—he can transform himself and take your place,” she says. “But more often, he does it to bring humor to a situation that desperately needs it.”

Rhenzy Feliz (“The Tender Bar,” “Runaways”) voices Camilo. “The entire idea behind his shape-shifting mixed with the ultimate love that he has for his family made this character so real and compelling,” says Feliz. “In talking about the character with our

directors, Jared [Bush] and Byron [Howard], we talked about the reason why he feels the need to shape-shift. On one hand, it brings joy to the people around him, but deep down he's a storyteller. That, plus the feeling that maybe what he brings to the table isn't enough, made Camilo so much more accessible to me. He has a need to be liked, and maybe if he does this really cool shape-shifting thing that people seem to love, he will be."

But it was the heart of the film that really drew Feliz to the project. "Anytime I can be a part of a movie that celebrates Latino culture in this way, paired with the unbelievable team behind it, it's really a no-brainer," he says. "I'd also never done voiceover before, so that was of interest as well. But really it's the team behind it that makes me get out of my seat. From the animation team to the writers, directors, music team and Disney—it really just all comes together."

According to casting director Jamie Roberts, the actor gave a lot of himself to the character. "Rhenzy's energy and enthusiasm were really appealing for a character like Camilo."

ANTONIO is shy with a huge heart. He has a special connection to Mirabel, relying on her for comfort and courage—especially on an important day when his cousin finds him nervously hiding under his bed. Daniel Rice, director of cinematography lighting, says the lighting in the scene helped convey the underlying emotion. "We start out with neutral to cooler lighting, but as Mirabel gets through to him, we slowly bring warmer light into the scene—the audience won't really notice it, but they'll feel it—they'll feel the bond Antonio shares with his cousin."

Antonio's kindness is matched only by his new magical ability to communicate with animals. "Because he's so shy, this newfound connection to animals is something he desperately needs," says director Jared Bush. "Each gift is different and provides something unique—they're not meant to be completely wonderful or completely burdensome. Everyone has a different experience."

Ravi Cabot-Conyers ("#blackAF," "Justine") lends his voice to Antonio. "We needed an actor that could showcase just how sweet and charming Antonio is," says producer Yvett Merino. "Ravi is just perfect."

Cabot-Conyers found a lot to like in the character. "Antonio is one of the most special and magical characters I've ever played," he says. "His heart is connected so strongly to the people he cares about, like Mirabel, and to the animals he communicates with. I love him for that!"

The actor, who turns 11 in February, says he's a longtime Disney fan. "I've been dressing up as Disney characters since I was old enough to walk and talk," says Cabot-Conyers. "The 3-year-old with the mustache, hook and red coat who introduced himself as 'that scalawag Hook' to other beachgoers was me! And that Pistol Pete holding the Clarabelle Cow plushie at my town carnival was me, too! So, being a part of 'Encanto' has been an actual dream come true. Oh! Did I mention Lin-Manuel Miranda?"

Antonio’s connection to animals called for the creation of his band of flying and four-legged friends. Among them are a jaguar, a tapir, a toucan and a giant rodent native to South America called a chigüiro.

BRUNO, the third of Alma’s triplets, has been estranged from the Madrigal family for as long as Mirabel can remember. According to head of story Jason Hand, whose wife’s family hails from Ecuador, Bruno’s choice years ago to actually leave his family is huge. “It’s a very big deal—especially for a tight-knit Latin family like the Madrigals,” says Hand. “The whole idea is that you stay together no matter what. That makes Bruno such an interesting character—he’s a bit of a tortured soul.”

Alessandro Jacomini, director of cinematography lighting, says artists used color to help shape the character. “The choices for Bruno reflected the ambiguity and mystery surrounding him,” Jacomini says. “We use a lot of green—it’s an interesting color that can be cool and distancing, like quartz. And when it’s warm, like grass for example, it’s familiar, beautiful and appealing.”

John Leguizamo (“Critical Thinking”) voices Bruno. “He brings this character to life like nobody else could,” says producer Clark Spencer. “It’s always exciting when someone comes in and exceeds even your wildest expectations.”

Says Leguizamo, “Bruno is so compelling because he is that guy that never quite fits in. He’s an outsider, but he also understands the world better because he's always wanted to belong to it.

“I was so pumped to be asked to the party,” Leguizamo continues. “Lin-Manuel wrote me a rap, and I flipped out! Plus, this is such a beautiful story set in Colombia. It’s a first in so many ways. The magic is enchanting, the comedy is so sharp, and the world created is irresistible.”

Gifted with the ability to see the future, Bruno made honest but often doomsaying predictions that proved problematic for Abuela and the rest of the family, so he disappeared, becoming the uncle nobody talks about—unless, of course, somebody talks about Bruno. In song.

“I think every family has stories you’re not allowed to talk about—we all have land mines inside our families,” says Lin-Manuel Miranda, who penned the song “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” for the film. “The more forbidden something is, the more you want to talk about it.”

According to Nathan Detroit Warner, director of cinematography layout, the filmmakers’ approach to the musical segments like “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” was inspired by big musical productions shot for a theatrical presentation. “It has a cinematic appeal to it,” says Warner. “Each camera becomes a character—it anticipates moves; it is lyrical itself.

“Animators typically lock the camera and the character together because they want their beautiful character right in the center of the frame,” Warner continues. “But in this case, the character might follow the camera—she might sing directly to the camera. We wanted this to feel like our interpretation of a Broadway musical. So even though our timing can be perfect, it doesn’t have to be.”

Filmmakers called on choreographer Jamal Sims to help stage the musical sequences in the film, including “We Don’t Talk About Bruno.” “I began with six dancers plus my amazing assistant Kaity Martinez. Our crew doubled as the characters in the movie for me to film the movement.”

The resulting footage was used by the animation team as reference to help bring the songs to life. Martinez worked alongside animators during the process for several sequences “to watch our movement come to life in a way that was accurate and authentic,” she says. “Once I realized that I could push the animators as if they were dancers to get the tiny details in movement and musicality, I felt very comfortable working with them in what started off as a new space for me.”

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION
Building a World Inspired by Colombia

The setting of a film is in many ways the heart of the story—influencing every decision that follows. Colombia sparked the imaginations of the filmmakers behind “Encanto” long before they even visited the country. “We knew our story was going to be about a family, which pointed us to Latin America, where family bonds are so strong,” says director Jared Bush. “We wanted to land in a place where there are lots of different types of people and ethnicities and cultures on top of music, dance and amazing architecture. Colombia is an amazing crossroads of Latin America.”

After filmmakers traveled to the country, they returned to Walt Disney Animation Studios with ideas, inspiration and the desire to show the beauty and uniqueness of the culture. Their experience was profound, serving as a guide to their storytelling. Says production designer Ian Gooding, “Our story is set in and deeply inspired by Colombia.”

To ensure a believable and respectful representation of the country that inspired the setting, the filmmakers worked with several consultants, including Juan Rendon and Natalie Osma, both Colombia natives. “I think we learned more than anybody about Colombia—and we’re from there,” says Rendon. “One of the first questions that came our way had to do with cultural dynamics in the country over the last century or so, and when we began our research—talking to people and digging into multiple resources—we were fascinated.”

Adds Osma, “There were times when they showed us a specific scene and we’d be blown away, saying ‘What inspired this place?’ And they’d tell us all about it. ‘It’s beautiful,’ we’d say. ‘I want to go there!’”

Gooding agrees. “The part of Colombia where we imagined our town might be is like perfection on Earth,” he says. “It never gets too hot or too cold—so much so that there was no glass in the windows.”

The village where the Madrigals reside would be in the Coffee Region (Eje Cafetero), says Gooding, which narrowed down for filmmakers the kind of architecture, plant life and backdrop that would complement the setting. “This area has the tallest palm trees in the world—wax palms,” says Gooding. “They can grow to more than 200 feet tall and live for hundreds of years. They’re enormous, and iconic to this area.”

The area is part of what’s known as the Cloud Forest, so the vegetation chosen for the film mirrored what would be found there. Filmmakers worked with a botanist who’s an expert in the region to develop an authentic list of flora. “It’s really helpful to be able to narrow the possibilities so that we can focus on trees and plants that would actually grow there,” says Gooding.

They approached the architecture in a similar way, consulting with two architects familiar with Colombian architecture dating back generations. Their research revealed a specific method utilized to build structures. “It’s called apisonada—or rammed earth,” says Gooding. “With this method, the house is made of gigantic blocks that are essentially made in place. They’d take a wooden mold and attach it to the wall and then back the earth into it. When it dried, they’d take the mold off, creating a large section of wall that they’d add to until the whole house was completed.

“Doorways and windows are supported on the top by long wooden planks that you can see sticking out, giving the houses a pretty distinctive look,” continues Gooding. “We learned that this building method is used all over the world—China has structures that are thousands of years old—and it’s very common in Colombia. The technique can actually be seen in the film, which is pretty cool.”

The color palette is vibrant and colorful, but rooted in an earthy, terra cotta color, which works well against the stone streets. Within the house, the colors were chosen to coincide with the characters—mirroring the cool or warm tones selected to differentiate the family units. Says associate production designer Lorelay Bové, “It’s very colorful and textural. Nothing is perfect—there aren’t a lot of geometric patterns. Everything is organic—handmade. That was one of the things we really wanted to get across. Imperfections are everywhere, creating this homey, lived-in feeling of warmth.”

Bové was charged with establishing the color story for much of the film, including the house, which continues the warmth established with the characters and captures the vibrancy of Colombia. The kitchen—largely Julieta’s domain—features yellows and warm whites, while the family members’ rooms are reflections of their gifts. Isabela’s room, filled with flowers, embraces the colors of native plants.

A LIGHT TOUCH

For Daniel Rice, director of cinematography lighting, one of the key principles of the film thematically is romanticism. “Romanticism is an art term that encapsulates emotion and feeling more than practicality,” he says. “Mirabel’s journey is very emotional for her and

her family, so we really wanted to push our lighting design theatrically to capture the emotion these characters are experiencing.

“But then there’s this grounded reality and truth, and I think that’s where a lot of magical realism lives,” Rice continues. “That’s why we did so much research about Colombia—we were so inspired by that location, including the climate, the weather and how the light looks in that region.”

CENTER STAGE

At the center of the Madrigal family casita is the source of the magic of the Encanto—a single candle that has been burning since Abuela Alma and her three babies made their way to what would become their home and community. According to head of effects animation Erin Ramos, the candle helped form the shape language of the film’s magic. “The flame influenced everything we did,” says Ramos. “The candle’s eternal flame creates orbs that look like boca created in a picture, but we call them ‘foca’ since it’s not a lens effect. That helped inform the shape language of the magic of the Encanto.”

The candle both protects the family and holds the magic that provides each child with a special gift, creating a magical door through which their gift is manifested. Says Bové, “These doors deliver the magic to the family members. The directors wanted them to be glowing, magical doors that were reminiscent of the candle’s flame.”

According to Ramos, the magical doors had to be special. “The child stands before their door on the special night and there’s a sparkling, swirling, foca-like pre-magic magic emanating from the door,” she says. “The particles begin to transform, ultimately creating a giant wave that illuminates the room and creates whatever world the child has been gifted. The leading edge of the magic is like the burning edge of a piece of paper—but in reverse—creating instead of destroying. It’s really cool.”

HOME SWEET HOME

The casita in “Encanto” is more than a house—it’s alive. Finding exactly what that meant took some time, however. Filmmakers had to answer questions regarding the house’s ability to emote, react to the Madrigals and misbehave. “We landed on the idea that it’s like your loyal dog who loves you and wants to be there for you,” says head of story Nancy Kruse. “It supports Mirabel when she’s down, but it isn’t all-knowing.”

Adds head of animation Renato dos Anjos, “The house is a unique challenge because it is, in a sense, a character. Normally, the environment is a prop—doors open and close—but they never really emote. One of the biggest challenges for us was having the house feel like a living, breathing, thinking thing that waves back when you wave at it. Our house is vibrant, helpful and it cares about the Madrigals. But they have to take care of it, too.”

To create the magic within the house, filmmakers kept in mind the real-life materials that would have been used to build a house in that time and place. “We don’t want the materials to move in a way they wouldn’t normally move,” says dos Anjos. “A tile, for example, can’t bend or it would break, but a piece of wood might be able to bend a little. Also, items inside the house—like a chair—can’t move around by itself. But the house

can move a chair across the room by picking it up and passing it from one floor board to the next."

Rigging the entire house and everything within it wasn't realistic, however. In an effort to provide flexibility to the animators, special tools were created. Says VFX supervisor Scott Kersavage, "We created what we called an 'ad hoc' rig that allowed animators to add controls to an object so they could animate it—anything from tiles on the roof to cobblestones in the courtyard. That way, they wouldn't feel limited to just the items we initially planned for—it's unique to this film but something that will likely continue in the future."

According to Camille Andre, art director environments, the house is connected to the family. "As the story begins to reveal that there are fissures forming within the family, the house begins to crack, too."

And just like the house itself, artists started with real-life information about the architecture and material used to build the house to determine how best to handle the cracking. "We did a lot of research about the foundation of a real house," says head of story Jason Hand. "If the foundation is not right, cracks will start to show and it will start to shift. It seemed like a great way to describe the symptoms within a magical thing. If there's an underlying problem with the foundation, the family, there will be problems with the house and the magic."

If the house was to suffer the consequences of the family's issues, filmmakers knew it couldn't be an ordinary event. According to head of effects animation David Hutchins, the cracks had to be art directed. "The cracks involved a combination of traditional key frame animation and actual drawn shapes," he says. "We wanted to have very specific control to be able to hit very specific notes, so the cracks themselves are hand drawn by the effects artists, and then they are hand animated as well."

According to head of effects animation Erin Ramos, the cracks have personality. There are 10 different levels of cracks, with a 10 being "multiple, enormous cracks traveling with purpose toward the candle in the window."

MAKING ROOM

In the story, when each child reaches age 5, they receive their gift—delivered through their own magical door, which invites them into their own magical room. But since Mirabel did not receive her gift, she has remained in the nursery. "It's not magical like the other rooms," says Andre. "But Mirabel has created her own magic in a way, drawing colorful patterns into the floorboards. Her art—embroidery, drawings—can be seen everywhere in the nursery. The main color of the nursery is green, which is the color we've always associated with Mirabel."

Also included in the house, of course, is the kitchen—which filmmakers considered Julieta's domain. Mirabel's mother has the power to heal through food, so the kitchen is designed with her in mind, with nods to Colombian kitchens of the era like a pump for water and a wood-fire oven. Says André, "It's supposed to be a warm place with a maternal feel to it. The kitchen is the heart of the house—it's where we see her

kneading dough to make arepas. We included traditional Colombian food within the décor of the kitchen—like hanging corn to dry."

There's mystery surrounding where Mirabel's Uncle Bruno is as the film gets underway. With Mirabel's help, Bruno's whereabouts will be revealed, so artists had to design his space with the same intrigue associated with the character. According to André, Bruno's cavern had to be a little scary as Mirabel has no idea what to expect from this estranged uncle. "We created rock formations that are like giant columns," says André. "His room is essentially a tower that represents his ability to see the future, but since he left—the room is devoid of life with no vegetation—just a lot of sand and rocks. There are antechambers with carvings inspired by pre-*Columbian* carvings, and a vision room where he would see his visions."

Sand plays an important role in Bruno's life, so filmmakers brainstormed unique ways to use the medium in their storytelling. Says Ramos, "We looked at the eye of Jupiter where gas flows around and has contrasting colors. The visions are built to look like projections on a sand screen."

MAKING "ENCANTO" SING
Lin-Manuel Miranda Pens Original Songs; Germaine Franco Creates Original Score

Featuring original songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and an original score composed by Germaine Franco, Walt Disney Animation Studios' 60th feature film, "Encanto" follows in the musical footsteps of many of its predecessors. The songs from Disney's classic films have proven unforgettable from generation to generation—from "Baby Mine" from 1941's "Dumbo" and "The Bare Necessities" in 1967's "The Jungle Book," to "Let It Go" in 2013's "Frozen" and "How Far I'll Go" in 2016's "Moana." "These films are full of emotion and music," says director Byron Howard. "'Encanto' really needed to be a film that lived up to our audience's expectations."

Adds director Jared Bush, "There's a lot of pressure on us to honor that legacy and do a great job. We are hopeful that the movie will resonate with audiences the way the movies that we grew up with resonated with us."

Miranda was part of the team helping to make that dream possible. "I was lucky enough to work on 'Moana,' and that was an incredible experience," he says. "I learned a lot about how music can help tell stories, and was excited to be part of 'Encanto' from the beginning."

Miranda wrote and produced eight original songs for "Encanto." Mike Elizondo ("96,000" from "In the Heights," "My Shot (Rise Up Remix)" from "The Hamilton Mixtape") co-produced the songs. "I hope audiences come away singing these songs just like so many classic Disney movies," says Elizondo. "There are so many positive messages about family and our relationships to one another. I also hope they realize how much variety there is in Colombian music. I learned so much about their rhythms and styles

during the production process, and I hope the audience can use the soundtrack as a gateway to discover Colombian music."

Original Songs

"The Family Madrigal" (performed by Stephanie Beatriz, Olga Merediz & cast) introduces the audience to the large extended Madrigal family. But, says Miranda, the song also introduces the idea that—unlike the rest of the children in her family—Mirabel did not receive a magical gift. "The song shows Mirabel when she is putting on her public face," he says. "It's a big contrast to the way she feels in 'Waiting on a Miracle.'"

"Waiting on a Miracle" (performed by Beatriz) is designed to reveal the inner-most thoughts of the protagonist—in this case, Mirabel. "If anyone ever says writing a Disney 'I Want' song is easy, they're lying," says Miranda. "A lot of the story work throughout the whole film is clarifying as specifically as possible what the journey is for our main character. It takes a lot of work from every department to finally find that answer in a way that the character can sing about it. There were many drafts before we found the song."

According to the songwriter, "Waiting for a Miracle" showcases Mirabel's feeling of being an outsider in more than just the lyrics. "Her song is in a different time signature than the rest of the family," says Miranda. "Every other song is 4/4—with really driving rhythms that you could hear at a club. But Mirabel's song is in 3/4—which is a characteristic rhythm of a Colombian bambuco. She's literally out of rhythm with the rest of her family."

"Surface Pressure" (performed by Jessica Darrow) illustrates Mirabel's older sister Luisa's true feelings about the super strength her gift affords her. "It's about how she's very cool on the surface," says Miranda. "There's nothing she can't handle. But under it all, there's a lot happening—there's just no time for those emotions to be expressed. So, I just wrote the most badass reggaeton song I could write with these crazy internal rhymes—and then blew it up to expose the vulnerability of her character."

"We Don't Talk About Bruno" (performed by Carolina Gaitán, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Beatriz & cast) is a family gossip song, says Miranda. "Every verse and every stanza introduce a different character. They're all riding the same musical landscape, but they ride it completely differently. Everyone sings the same chord progression with a totally different rhythm and a totally different cadence."

Adds Elizondo, "There is a cross-blend of genres between hip-hop and Colombian music on this song that I think works very well. There are also a lot of great characters that are featured that builds to a huge climax with all of them performing and singing at the same time. To be honest, I'm not sure how Lin pulled off so many lyrics and melodies being able to work all together. The choreography on this song is off the charts and there are also so many comedic moments. I think it's going to be a highlight of the movie."

Miranda wrote **"What Else Can I Do?"** (performed by Guerrero and Beatriz) for Mirabel's oldest sister, Isabela, who struggles with her role as the golden child—always

striving to be perfect but never quite reaching her goal. “Isabela is stepping out of her traditional role,” he says. “I was really inspired by the ’90s rock en español movement. When I was a teenager, the best rock music was actually coming out of Latin America, and it was in Spanish.”

“Dos Oruguitas” marked a first for Miranda: “This is the first song I ever wrote—beginning to end—in Spanish,” he says. “The song, which comes later in the story, is about Abuela and Abuelo’s love story, but I resisted the notion of being literal. I was inspired by the imagery I’d seen—particularly one of a flame becoming a butterfly. I thought, ‘What if I write a folk song that feels like it’s always existed?’ ‘Dos Oruguitas’ is about two caterpillars who are in love but are scared to separate because they’re afraid of changing. It’s about the journey of Mirabel’s grandparents—their realization that sometimes you have to let go, you have to do the impossible.”

Sebastián Yatra performs the original song “Dos Oruguitas” in Spanish in the film, as well as **“Two Oruguitas,”** the English language version of the song, in the end-credits. Born in Medellín, Colombia, and raised in Miami, Latin GRAMMY®-nominated singer/songwriter Yatra says, “It’s always been a dream of mine to be a part of a Disney movie and it really hits the heart when it’s a Disney movie about my country and showing the best of what we have to offer, which is love and family and miracles.”

Tasked with writing a song that would help bring the story to a close, Miranda says **“All of You”** (performed by Beatriz, Merediz, Leguizamo, Adassa, Maluma & cast) was challenging because the ending of a film must come organically—which often takes time, so “All of You” was the last song written. “It addresses the question of who we truly are—and everybody weighs in,” says Miranda.

“Colombia, Mi Encanto” is performed by 17-time GRAMMY and Latin GRAMMY winner, singer, songwriter and actor Carlos Vives, who’s a native of Santa Marta, Colombia. “This song is a celebration of the magical diversity of Colombia,” says Vives. “I can’t wait to see how the music will blend with the images and the characters inspired by the ‘encanto’ of Colombians.”

Says Miranda, “Carlos Vives is one of my favorite Colombian artists and it was a dream to have him sing this song, which was inspired by his great vallenatos.”

SCORE

Germaine Franco composed the original score for “Encanto.” Franco worked closely with the filmmakers and Miranda to create a signature score that complemented the songs and story. According to Franco, the filmmakers sought a score that was unlike anything she’d heard before. “They were looking for something that was different—something more intimate with textures. We talked about what the sound of magical realism might be.”

The score also had to reflect the film’s Latin American setting. Franco says Colombia has “a treasure of music that still exists in the country.”

Franco leaned into Mirabel's journey. "I really identified with her," says the composer. "I tried really hard to get inside her head to understand how she would feel at different moments, and I would interpret that through the music. I wanted to find 'la voz femenina'—the female voice of the music of Colombia. I felt that main theme was about Mirabel discovering her own personal true self."

Franco wrote a theme early on to represent the character. "I was just sitting at a piano and came up with a theme for Mirabel," she says. "I didn't think at the time it would be her theme. It just felt like her—if she were flying, because she's always searching for answers. And I thought, in magical realism, anything goes. I could morph it and change it to fit into different scenes. It can be melodic and really emotional, or made into a cumbia, which was really fun."

The composer was also responsible for creating seamless transitions from songs to score, as well as adding orchestra to several of the songs. "We wanted the body of music to feel organic as a whole within the movie," she says.

The *Encanto Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* is set for release from Walt Disney Records on Nov. 19, 2021. The physical soundtrack will be available on Dec. 17.

ABOUT THE VOICE CAST

STEPHANIE BEATRIZ (voice of Mirabel) is best known for playing Detective Rosa Diaz on NBC's Golden Globe® Award–winning comedy "Brooklyn Nine-Nine."

Beatriz's standout performance has earned rave reviews and numerous awards, including the 2018 Imagen Award for best supporting actress in a TV series and a 2015 Screen Actors Guild Award® nomination for outstanding performance by an ensemble in a comedy series. In season six, she marked her directorial debut—the episode, which featured a relevant #MeToo storyline, received praise from fans and critics alike.

In film, Beatriz starred as Carla along with a star-studded cast—including Anthony Ramos, Corey Hawkins, Melissa Barrera, Leslie Grace, Dascha Polanco and Jimmy Smits—in Warner Bros.' film adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical "In the Heights," for director Jon M. Chu.

Other notable film credits include 2017 SXSW Audience Award–winning film "The Light of the Moon"; George C. Wolfe's drama "You're Not You," opposite Hilary Swank; Destin Daniel Cretton's drama "Short Term 12," opposite Rami Malek and Brie Larson; and John Lee's "Pee-wee's Big Holiday." She recently voiced Sweet Mayhem in "The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part."

As a bisexual Latina, Beatriz is known for her outspoken advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights and queer representation in the entertainment industry.

MARÍA CECILIA BOTERO (voice of Abuela Alma) studied anthropology while working as an actress. She is the daughter of acting teacher Jaime Botero Gómez. Botero began her career with “The Canterville Ghost” in 1971 alongside Carlos Benjumea, Maruja Toro, Enrique Pontón and Franky Linero. She replaced Mariela Hijuelos, who died during the recording of “La Vorágine” (1975). She played Manuela Saénz in the series “Bolívar, the Man of Difficulties” in 1981. She also played María Candia in “La Pezuña del Diablo” (1983), Yadira La Ardiente in “Caballo viejo” (1988) and Sándalo Daza in “Música, Maestro” (1990). Her siblings, Óscar Botero and Ana Cristina Botero, are also actors.

She made her acting debut 51 years ago, when she starred in the movie “María” alongside Taryn Power and Fernando Allende. Over the years Botero has acted with professionalism, dignity and strength and has since become one of the most beloved figures in Colombian entertainment. After “The Canterville Ghost” she participated in “Comedy Monday,” “La Vorágine,” “Caminos de Gloria,” “Lejos del Nido,” “Los Novios,” “La Rosa de los Vientos,” “Dos Mujeres” and “Ama la Academia,” just to mention a few productions. Perhaps the most notable of her characters are Yadira La Ardiente, from the soap opera “Caballo viejo,” and Sándalo Daza, from “Música, Maestro.”

In 2005 Botero was invited to be part of the soap opera “Lorena,” produced by RCN Televisión. This was her first antagonistic role, giving life to the evil Rufina de Ferrero, where she radically changed her look and showed her great histrionic capacity. Parallel to her career as a soap opera actress, Botero produced and starred in several musical comedies directed by her husband and Argentine star David Stivel (who she married in 1982), who has since passed away. Her dream of popularizing musical theater in Colombia led her to make such important productions as “Peter Pan,” “Sugar” and “The Woman of the Year.” The lively and multifaceted artist also stood out as presenter of the “CM &” and seven o’clock newscasts, and as host of the talk shows “Maria C,” “Contigo” and “Las Tardes de Maria C.” Botero has not neglected her love for teaching and directs the Charlot Academy, the acting school created by her father.

Emmy® winner **JOHN LEGUIZAMO (voice of Bruno)** has appeared in over 100 films and countless television shows while establishing a career that defies categorization. With boundless and visceral creativity, his work in film, theater, television and literature covers a variety of genres, continually threatening to create a few of its own.

Leguizamo was most recently seen in the highly anticipated Netflix series “When They See Us,” which follows the story of the Central Park Five, a group of five teens from Harlem falsely accused of a brutal attack in Central Park. He also appeared in Michael Cristofer’s “The Night Clerk.”

He has also recently been seen in his return to Broadway at Studio 54 with his critically acclaimed one-man show “Latin History for Morons,” which garnered him a Special Tony Award® and a Tony nomination for best play. In the show he delivers his take on 500 years of Latin history spanning the Aztec and Incan Empires to World War II. The

show will be making its return to the American stage this year in a five-month national tour.
Upcoming projects include “The Adventures of Drunky,” opposite Tyler the Creator and Jeffrey Tambor, and “The Godmother.”

Leguizamo garnered a Golden Globe® nomination for best supporting actor for his performance as a sensitive drag queen in “To Wong Foo Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar,” was the recipient of the 2002 ALMA Special Achievement Award for Entertainer of the Year, and picked up ALMA Award nominations for his roles in “Moulin Rouge” (best supporting actor) and “King of the Jungle” (best lead actor).

Other film credits for him include “Nancy,” “John Wick: Chapter 2,” “The Hollow Point,” “The Infiltrator,” “Ice Age: Collision Course,” “The Crash,” “11:55,” “Porzingod,” “Stealing Cars,” “Sisters,” “Meadowland,” “Experimenter,” “American Ultra,” “Cymbeline,” “Fugly!,” “John Wick,” “Chef,” “Ride Along,” “Underdogs,” “Walking with Dinosaurs 3D,” “The Counselor,” “Kick-Ass 2,” “Fish N Chips: The Movie,” “Inocente,” “The Trip 2,” “Ice Age: Continental Drift,” “One for the Money,” “The Lincoln Lawyer,” “Vanishing on 7th Street,” “Big Balls,” “Repo Men,” “The Ministers,” “Rage,” “Gamer,” “Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs,” “Nothing Like the Holidays,” “Miracle at St. Anna,” “Righteous Kill,” “The Happening,” “The Babysitters,” “The Take,” “Ice Age: The Meltdown,” “Land of the Dead,” “The Honeymooners,” “Zig Zag,” “Ice Age,” “Collateral Damage,” “Doctor Dolittle,” “Romeo + Juliet,” “The Fan,” “A Pyromaniac’s Love Story,” “Super Mario Bros.,” “Night Owl,” “Poison,” “Die Hard 2” and “Casualties of War.”

Leguizamo’s TV work also includes “Great Performances,” “BoJack Horseman,” “Animals,” “Waco,” “Bloodline,” “The Kill Point,” “ER,” “My Name is Earl,” “The Brothers Garcia,” “House of Buggin’” and “Miami Vice.”

In 1991 Leguizamo created his first off-Broadway sensation as writer and performer in his one-man show “Mambo Mouth,” in which he portrayed seven different characters. He received Obie, Outer Critics Circle and Vanguardia awards for this performance. Leguizamo went on to create his second off-Broadway one-man show, “Spic-O-Rama,” which garnered a Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award for best American play, the Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for best Broadway performance, the Theatre World Award for outstanding new talent, and the Drama Desk Award for best solo performance. Leguizamo’s debut to Broadway was his one-man show “Freak,” for which he received Tony Award® nominations for best play and best performance by a leading actor in a play. Additional theater credits include “Sexaholix… A Love Story,” which received a Tony nomination for best special theatrical performance, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “La Puta Vida Trilogy” and “American Buffalo.”

Leguizamo went on to film special presentations for HBO of his one-man shows including “Mambo Mouth”; “Spic-O-Rama”; “Freak,” for which he won an Emmy® Award for outstanding performance in a variety or music program; “Sexaholix… A Love Story”; and “Ghetto Klown.”

Leguizamo lengthened his lists of credits with his first literary project in 2006, his memoir, “Pimps, Hos, Playa Hatas and All the Rest of My Hollywood Friends: My Life.”

He also released “Ghetto Klown,” the graphic novel adaptation of his 2011 Drama Desk Award–winning one-man Broadway show, in 2015.

Leguizamo currently resides in New York City with his wife and two children.

MAURO CASTILLO (voice of Félix), a well-known artist in Colombia and Latin America, is a passionate representative of Latin culture. He has been nominated for two Latin GRAMMY® Awards, and was a leading voice in Grupo Niche, one of the most popular Colombian salsa groups known worldwide.

His most recent album, “Idilios,” has been reviewed and featured in Billboard USA magazine. “Viene y se va,” one of his most popular songs, boasts more than 120 weeks in the top charts on the radio in Colombia. Castillo is the first salsa solo artist to be awarded the Silver Play Button from YouTube Creator Awards.

Castillo has also starred in many TV series, including “El Joe la Leyenda,” “Pambele,” “Rafael Orozco” and the TV documentary “De Borondo.”

JESSICA DARROW (voice of Luisa) is a Cuban American actress, singer and comedian from Miami, Fla., currently based in New York City. She received her BFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, which included a year of study at Shakespeare’s Globe in London.

In addition to her animation work, Darrow is currently starring in the “Disney Television Discovers: Talent Showcase.” She can also be seen in the indie comedy “Feast of the Seven Fishes.”

ANGIE CEPEDA (voice of Julieta) can be seen as a lead in the Duplass brothers’ HBO anthology series “Room 104.” Previously she was a series regular on “Berko: El Arte de Callar,” recurring on “Jane the Virgin,” and starred alongside Nicolas Cage in the feature film “Kill Chain.” Cepeda has also starred in over 20 feature films, including Robert Duvall’s “Wild Horses” and Juan Felipe Cano’s “La Semilla del Silenco,” as well as “A Night in Old Mexico” and “Love in the Time of Cholera.”

CAROLINA GAITÁN (voice of Pepa) is a Colombian actress and singer. She’s studied at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in New York, and her talent and versatility have been rewarded with two Premios Tu Mundo from Telemundo. She has starred in series with lead roles in “Celia” (Telemundo), “Sin Senos Sí Hay Paraíso” (Telemundo), “Narcos” (Netflix) and “Juanpis” (Netflix), among many others. She has also worked on several musicals at Colombia’s National Theater. As a singer she has lent her voice to many TV theme songs and has her own album composed by her. She also participated in “The Greatest Showman” promotional theme, “This Is Me.”

DIANE GUERRERO (voice of Isabela) is known for her roles on the hit shows “Orange Is the New Black,” “Jane the Virgin,” HBO’s “Doom Patrol” and Sony Pictures’ “Blast Beat.” She is a two-book author, human rights activist, a child of Colombian parents, and was recently the host and exec producer of her NPR podcast “Yeah No, I’m Not OK,” in which she candidly discussed mental health issues affecting the BIPOC community.

Actor, producer and activist **WILMER VALDERRAMA (voice of Agustín)** has been making audiences laugh, listen and think for nearly two decades. Perhaps most recognized for his role as exchange student Fez on the Emmy®-nominated series “That ’70s Show,” he was catapulted to stardom in the role and garnered numerous Teen Choice Awards.

Valderrama currently stars in the No. 1 TV drama “NCIS” on CBS and was most recently seen in the indie drama “Blast Beat,” which premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. On the animation front, Valderrama also recently voiced Thurman Sanchez in the Netflix animated film “Dog Gone Trouble,” which he also executive produced. Prior to that he voiced Gaxton in the Academy Award®–nominated Disney and Pixar film “Onward,” as well as the first Latino Prince Charming in the animated film “Charming” for Netflix, and the main character of Disney’s hugely popular animated children’s show “Handy Manny,” which introduced preschoolers to Spanish. Other television credits include appearances in Netflix’s “The Ranch,” ABC’s “Grey’s Anatomy” and Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino’s television series “From Dusk Till Dawn.”

Behind the camera, Valderrama created and produced the MTV series “Yo Momma,” also serving as the host for all three seasons. He and his production company, WV Entertainment, recently renewed their first-look deal with CBS TV Studios. The company has multiple projects in development, including the Yosemite National Park crime drama “The Trail” for CBS, family comedy “The Turners” for ABC and the WWII drama “Patriots From the Barrio,” based on the book by Dave Gutierrez.

In the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Valderrama was inspired to turn the spotlight on frontline workers after a grocery store encounter, and used his platform to give a voice to those being directly impacted by the pandemic with his IG Live series “6 Feet Apart.” These conversations have since morphed into his popular podcast with iHeartRadio called “Essential Voices with Wilmer Valderrama.” Produced by WV Entertainment and Clamor, each episode is broken up into two parts: first an intimate conversation with a frontline worker and then a roundtable with activists, thought leaders and celebrities discussing what each of us can do to help.

Valderrama is active in several philanthropic agencies. Along with America Ferrera and Ryan Piers Williams, he co-founded HARNESS, a group dedicated to connecting communities through conversation to inspire action and power change. In addition, Valderrama serves on the board of Voto Latino and is co-chair of its artist coalition as well as the spokesperson for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) and founder of its Ready 2 Lead program, which educates and empowers Latino youth. Valderrama is also deeply involved with our military and was recently named a USO

Global Ambassador in support of the organization's 80th anniversary. He has traveled with the USO a multitude of times, having participated in over 40 shows domestically and internationally. In 2013 Valderrama was honored with an ALMA Award for outstanding social activism.

Born in Miami and raised in Venezuela from age 3 to 13, Valderrama is fluent in Spanish and English. His family relocated to Los Angeles, where he currently resides.

RHENZY FELIZ (voice of Camilo) recently wrapped filming George Clooney's "The Tender Bar" for Amazon Studios opposite Tye Sheridan and Ben Affleck, based on the New York Times bestselling memoir. Feliz can next be seen in Peter Hedges' feature film "The Same Storm."

Feliz stars on the current season of Ryan Murphy's award-winning and critically acclaimed series for FX, "American Horror Stories." His other credits include a lead role in the Netflix feature film "All Together Now" and the lead of the Marvel series "Runaways," which is based on the fan-beloved comic of the same name. The Dominican American actor graduated from Santa Monica High School only a few years ago and has not stopped working since. During his senior year, he booked his first professional acting job, joining season two of "Casual," the Jason Reitman–produced dramedy for Hulu.

RAVI CABOT-CONYERS (voice of Antonio) was most recently seen starring as a series regular alongside Rashida Jones ("Parks and Recreation") and Kenya Barris ("Black-ish," "Mixed-ish," "Girls Trip") in Barris' single-camera comedy for Netflix, "#BlackAF." Previously, Cabot-Conyers recurred as Leo for the CBS All Access original series "Tell Me a Story," and guested on the Fox medical drama "The Resident," garnering much acclaim. In addition to his film work as Gogo in Tom Dolby's "The Artist's Wife," Ravi enjoyed a leading turn opposite Glynn Turman in the Ava DuVernay/ArrayNow–produced feature "Justine," as well as a supporting role alongside Martin Freeman in the Jason Winer–directed "Ode to Joy."

ADASSA (voice of Dolores) was born in Miami, Fla., and raised in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, to Afro-Colombian parents. She started out as a reggaeton singer-songwriter and quickly became known as the "Reggaeton Princess."

While signed to Universal Latin, she collaborated and toured with Enrique Iglesias, Daddy Yankee, Don Omar, Wisin y Yandel, Pitbull, Aventura, Zion y Lennox, Ivy Queen, Lil Jon, Kevin Lyttle, Vico C, Baby Rasta & Gringo, Lil' Flip, Sasha, Baby Bash, Juvenile and Nina Sky, among others, including sold-out concerts at Madison Square Garden, American Airlines Arena, the Rose Bowl, Los Angeles Centennial Arena and the Calle 8 Festival.

She also made high-profile cameo appearances with Ciara (with whom she toured in Japan) and Missy Elliott on "1, 2 Step" followed by one with Pitbull on the title track

record from her debut album, “Kamasutra,” alongside Tego Calderón and Roselyn Sanchez, which reached No. 20 on the U.S. Hot 100 and reached No. 12 on Billboard’s U.S. Tropical Charts and Top 10 in the National Sales Charts in Japan as well as sold over 100,000 ringtones in Japan alone. The song “Bounce” (duet with Turkish pop star Tarkan) was a great success in Europe for Adassa, as well as her single “De Tra,” which also reached No. 40 on Billboard’s Latin Tropical Airplay Chart. The success of her releases sent Adassa on tour through Latin America, Mexico, the U.S., Jordan, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Germany, Switzerland, Korea and Japan.

Aside from being showcased as a guest five times on the legendary show “Sabado Gigante,” her other TV appearances include “Billboard Latino”; “Access Hollywood”; Mun 2; VH1; MTV 1, 2, 3; “Mi TRL”; “La Esquina with Pitbull”; “Video Countdown”; “Escandalo TVN”; “Planeta TV”; “Caliente”; “Pepsi Musica”; “Japan TV”; “Fuzion”; “Tu Eres El VJ”; “Tu Desayuno Alegre”; “Cotorreando”; “The Roof”; “Fashion Week Awards”; “LA TV”; “Accesso Total”; “Otro Rollo”; “Pepsi Blue Carpet Bash” and many more. Her singles have been featured on TV shows across the Latin channels, including but not limited to “Despierta America,” “Al Rojo Vivo” and “El Gordo y La Flaca” as well as performing the infamous jingles for the McDonald’s campaign “Me Encanta” and the Toyota Worldwide Television Campaign.

Shortly after leaving Universal Music Latin, Adassa explored the American mainstream dance market and signed to the veteran independent dance label Kult Records from New York City. Their first three collaborations produced a slew of EDM crossover titles that she co-wrote and co-performed, including a spin-off of Shannon’s “Let the Music Play” entitled “Boom,” co-featuring Snoop Dogg, “Can’t Stop Believing,” co-featuring Pitbull, and “I Wanna Feel Real,” co-featuring Flo Rida.

Adassa is currently independent and co-producing music with award-winning producer Gabriel Candiani, and together they have over 6,000 placements in TV and film worldwide with multiple production music labels including Warner Chappell PM and Universal as well as their own label, Sky Urbano.

MALUMA (voice of Mariano) brings an undeniable presence and memorable sound to the stage. Juan Luis Londoño Arias, known to his fans as Maluma, has skyrocketed onto the music scene within the last 10 years. At 27 years old, he has crossed over into the American, Asian, Latin American, European and Middle Eastern markets, making him one of today’s hottest, top-charting international Latin superstars to come out of South America.

This singing/songwriting/acting powerhouse was born and raised in Medellín, Columbia, and is one of social media’s most followed artists in the world. Maluma has released six studio albums including his most recent album, “#7DJ - Seven Days in Jamaica.” Recently, his popular hit single “Hawai” became 14x platinum/diamond certified; his “Hawai Remix” featuring The Weeknd became 6x platinum; and his fifth album, “Papi Juancho,” is now 4x platinum certified.

Maluma is an award-winning artist who has been recognized by the Latin GRAMMYS, Billboard and Latin Billboard Awards, the VMAs, MTV and many more. In addition, he's known as a fashion icon, gracing top editorial covers and collaborating with several top fashion houses. Next year, Maluma continues his acting career in "Marry Me" alongside Jennifer Lopez and Owen Wilson.

As a philanthropist, Maluma focuses on helping young teens in Colombia with art/music programs through his non-profit foundation, El Arte De Los Suneos. Passionate about saving lives through the arts just like music saved his family, Maluma pursues his global philanthropic efforts alongside his sister and parents.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JARED BUSH (Director/Screenplay by/Story by) helms Walt Disney Animation Studios' 60th feature film, "Encanto," directing alongside Byron Howard. He was previously co-director and screenwriter on the Oscar®-winning feature "Zootopia" as well as screenwriter for the Oscar-nominated "Moana" and executive producer on "Raya and the Last Dragon." He was also co-creator, executive producer and writer for Disney XD's animated comedy adventure series "Penn Zero: Part-Time Hero."

Bush, who began his career as a script reader for Oscar®-winning director Robert Zemeckis, worked as a staff writer on the series "Baby Bob," starring Adam Arkin and Elliott Gould. Bush added producing to his repertoire, serving as executive story editor and co-producer of Will Smith's series "All of Us." Bush has developed original television series for Revolution Studios, Fox and NBC, and feature film projects for New Line Cinema, Columbia/Tristar and 20th Century Fox.

A Harvard University graduate with a degree in English and American literature, Bush is an avid traveler who has visited 40 countries on six continents, and an accomplished trombone player who has played with several jazz bands over the years. Bush currently resides in Los Angeles, Calif., with his college sweetheart and three sons.

BYRON HOWARD (Director/Story by) helms Walt Disney Animation Studios' 60th animated feature, "Encanto," directing alongside Jared Bush. Having started his Walt Disney Animation Studios career over 25 years ago, Howard has directed the Oscar®-winning feature "Zootopia" (with Rich Moore), the worldwide hit feature "Tangled" (with Nathan Greno), the short "Tangled Ever After" and the Academy Award®–nominated feature "Bolt" (with Chris Williams). Howard was also executive producer on "Frozen 2."

As a child, Howard's favorite Disney animated films included "Robin Hood," "Cinderella" and "Sleeping Beauty." He was also inspired by artists like Chuck Jones, Ronald Searle and Bill Watterson, and he would fill reams of computer paper with characters of his own creation. His love of art and animation continued through high school and college.

Howard earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at The Evergreen State College in Washington, where he pursued his interest in filmmaking by studying cinematography,

art and literature. By 1991 he was part of the Disney family, hosting the animation tour at Disney-MGM Studios in Orlando. In 1994 Howard officially joined the Walt Disney Animation Studios in Florida as an inbetweener and clean-up artist on “Pocahontas.” He quickly went on to become an animator on “Mulan” and a supervising animator on “Lilo & Stitch” and “Brother Bear,” as well as doing character design on both those films.

Howard later relocated to California, where he continued his study of cinematography and drawing as a story artist and character designer at Walt Disney Animation Studios before becoming a director in 2006. Walt Disney Animation Studios’ Oscar®-nominated feature “Bolt” marked Howard’s debut as a feature film director (alongside Chris Williams). Howard also designed some of the characters in that film.

Howard loves the collaborative medium of animation because it combines art, cinematography, writing, design, acting and music with a family of supportive and talented artists and crew. Team members inspire each other to achieve something greater than they could alone.

In addition to his lifelong passion for animation and a career spanning the last 25 years, Howard’s interests include art, music, theater, travel and a deep love for animals.

CHARISE CASTRO SMITH (Co-Director/Screenplay by/Story by), the co-director/co-writer of Walt Disney Animation Studios’ 60th feature film, “Encanto,” is a writer, producer, co-director and actor originally from Miami, Fla.

A graduate of Brown University, Castro Smith earned her MFA from the Yale School of Drama. Her playwrighting credits include “El Huracán,” which played at the Yale Repertory Theatre in Fall 2018 as part of The Sol Project—an initiative launched in 2016 that works in partnership with leading theaters around the country to amplify the voices of Latinx playwrights. Castro Smith’s playwrighting credits also include “Feathers and Teeth,” a horror comedy that debuted at Chicago’s Goodman Theatre in Fall 2015, and “The Hunchback of Seville,” a dark comedy set in 16th-century Seville that premiered in 2014 at Seattle’s Washington Ensemble Theatre and played at Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, R.I., in 2016.

Her television credits include “The Haunting of Hill House,” Netflix’s supernatural horror drama series; Fox’s “The Exorcist,” a series adaptation of the classic movie; and “Sweetbitter,” a Starz series based on the novel by Stephanie Danler.

Castro Smith resides in Los Angeles, Calif., with her husband and daughter.

YVETT MERINO (Producer) first came to Walt Disney Animation Studios 25 years ago, and has worked in a variety of production capacities on some of the most popular animated features of all time. “Encanto,” Walt Disney Animation Studios’ 60th feature film, is Merino’s first feature film as producer. Among her most recent credits, she served as production manager on the Academy Award®–winning feature “Big Hero 6,” as well as the Oscar®-nominated “Moana.” Launching her Disney Animation career in

the Technology department, she moved into the world of Production as a supervisor on "Tangled." She went on to work with the Stereo team on "The Lion King 3D," and with various departments on "Wreck-It Ralph."

Merino was also a part of the team that started Voces@Disney, the Studio's first Latinx employee resource group, where she served as co-president for two years.

Merino lives in Los Angeles, Calif., with her family. She holds an MBA from Loyola Marymount University and an undergraduate degree in sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

CLARK SPENCER (Producer) is the president of Walt Disney Animation Studios, overseeing all aspects of studio operations and production, partnering with chief creative officer Jennifer Lee. Spencer is also a producer of Walt Disney Animation Studios' 60th feature film, "Encanto." Prior to beginning his tenure as president in August 2019, Spencer produced five Oscar®-nominated feature films for Disney Animation and received an Academy Award® for 2016's megahit "Zootopia." Spencer's other credits as producer include the hit films "Lilo & Stitch," "Bolt," "Wreck-It Ralph" and "Ralph Breaks the Internet." Spencer has received two Producers Guild of America Awards for best animated film for "Zootopia" and "Wreck-It Ralph."

Spencer has served in a variety of top executive capacities for Disney Animation over the past three decades. He joined Disney in July 1990 as a senior business planner in the finance and planning department, earning subsequent promotions to manager of studio planning in 1991 and director of studio planning and finance in 1992.

In 1993 Spencer joined Disney Animation as the division's director of planning and was quickly promoted to the role of vice president of planning and finance. The Hollywood Reporter ranked Spencer in its class of 1995 among the Next Generation of emerging young executives under the age of 35. In 1996 he was elevated to the role of senior vice president of finance and operations for Walt Disney Animation Studios and Theatrical Productions, a post he held until his move to Disney's Florida-based animation studio in September 1998.

Spencer served as senior vice president and general manager of the Florida Studio, where he oversaw all aspects of production and operations at the studio. In 1999 Spencer was tapped to produce the second animated feature to be made at the Florida studio, the Oscar®-nominated feature "Lilo & Stitch." The hit movie proved to be a franchise for The Walt Disney Company, spawning three DVD sequels, an animated TV series and characters that are still popular today. In 2002 Spencer returned to the animation studio in Burbank, Calif., as executive producer of "Meet the Robinsons," overseeing the story development of the project. He then went on to serve as producer on Disney Animation's 2008 Oscar-nominated feature "Bolt."

A native of Seattle, Wash., Spencer is a 1985 graduate of Harvard University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in history. He spent three years on Wall Street as a

financial associate with Bankers Trust Company before returning to Harvard Business School, where he earned his MBA in 1990.

LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA (Original Songs by/Original Songs Produced by/Story by) is an award-winning songwriter, actor and director. He helms Netflix's upcoming musical drama film "tick, tick…BOOM!" set for release on Nov. 19, 2021. Miranda also wrote and produced eight original songs for Walt Disney Animation Studios' upcoming feature film "Encanto," opening on Nov. 24, 2021.

"Hamilton"—with book, music and lyrics by Miranda, in addition to him originating the title role—was awarded the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Drama and earned a record-breaking 16 Tony Award® nominations, winning 11, including two personally for Miranda for book and score of a musical. The Original Broadway Cast Recording of "Hamilton" won the 2016 GRAMMY® for best musical theater album. Both Miranda and "Hamilton" won 2016 Drama League Awards for distinguished performance and outstanding production of a musical, respectively. Miranda, Thomas Kail, Andy Blankenbuehler and Alex Lacamoire were awarded a 2018 Kennedy Center Honor for their collaborative achievement in "Hamilton" and its continued artist impact. "The Hamilton Mixtape," a concept album inspired by the show's score, was released in 2016. A film of the 2015 Broadway company of "Hamilton" was released on Disney+ in 2020.

Miranda's "In the Heights" (originally conceived by Miranda, with book by Quiara Alegría Hudes and direction by Thomas Kail) received four 2008 Tony Awards®, with Miranda receiving a Tony for best score as well as a nomination for best leading actor in a musical. "In the Heights" also took home a 2009 GRAMMY® Award for its Original Broadway Cast Album. In 2016 Miranda won the Olivier Award for outstanding achievement in music for the original London production of "In the Heights." The film adaptation of "In the Heights," with songs by Miranda and screenplay by Quiara Alegría Hudes, was released by Warner Bros. in June 2021.

Miranda is the co-composer (with Tom Kitt), and co-lyricist (with Amanda Green) of Broadway's "Bring It On: The Musical." He contributed new songs to the revival of Stephen Schwartz's "Working" and Spanish translations for the 2009 Broadway revival of "West Side Story." In 2014 Miranda received an Emmy® Award with Tom Kitt for their song "Bigger" from the 67th Annual Tony® Awards. Miranda contributed music, lyrics and vocals to several songs in Disney's feature film "Moana," which earned him a 2017 Oscar® nomination and a 2018 GRAMMY® Award for the original song "How Far I'll Go."

Miranda is a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation Award, the National Arts Club Medal of Honor, the ASCAP Foundation's Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award and the Portrait of a Nation Prize. He has received stars on both the Puerto Rico Walk of Fame and the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Miranda, and The Miranda Family, are active supporters of initiatives that increase people of color's representation throughout the arts and government, assure access to women's reproductive health, and promote resilience in Puerto Rico.

Miranda's TV/film credits include, among others, "Vivo," "His Dark Materials," "We the People," "Fosse/Verdon," "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Saturday Night Live," "DuckTales," "Modern Family" and "Mary Poppins Returns." He received his B.A. from Wesleyan University in 2002. He lives with his family in New York.

MIKE ELIZONDO (Original Songs Co-Produced by) is a GRAMMY® Award–winning producer, songwriter and musician who has collaborated with major artists across many genres.

In addition to an 11-year partnership with Dr. Dre, Elizondo has produced songs for Eminem, Carrie Underwood, NF, Fiona Apple, 50 Cent, Keith Urban, Twenty-One Pilots, Ed Sheeran, Gary Clark Jr., Regina Spektor and the Jonas Brothers. A three-time GRAMMY® nominee, Elizondo took home the best rock or gospel album GRAMMY with Switchfoot in 2011 for the band's "Hello Hurricane." In 2016 Lin-Manuel Miranda asked him to produce three songs on "The Hamilton Mixtape."

Elizondo has extensive co-writing credits, including Eminem's "The Real Slim Shady" and 50 Cent's "In Da Club." He's also penned songs for artists including Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige, Eve, Snoop Dogg, Macy Gray, Nelly Furtado and Mandy Moore, among others. Elizondo also worked at Warner Bros. Records, where he used his passion for artist development to work with bands such as The Regrettes.

Elizondo is also an accomplished musician, having contributed bass to Ry Cooder's "Chavez Ravine" and B.B. King's "Ladies and Gentlemen…Mr. B.B. King," among other albums. In 2018 Elizondo became the music director of American Public Media's "Live From Here," which is hosted by Chris Thile.

Elizondo recently relocated to Nashville, where he actively continues to produce, co-write and seek new talent.

GERMAINE FRANCO (Original Score Composed and Produced by) is a unique award-winning composer working in Hollywood today. Her work includes collaborating with film directors, storytellers and production teams on studio blockbusters, independent features, documentaries, television series and immersive attractions, as well as concert and choral music. Franco is the first Latina invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' music branch and to receive the Annie Award for outstanding achievement for music in an animated feature for her contribution to "Coco." Franco co-wrote and produced five of the six original songs, including "Un Poco Loco" and "Proud Corazón." She also produced, orchestrated and arranged the 2018 Oscar®-winning song "Remember Me."

Recently, Franco scored two No. 1 Netflix films, "Work It" and "The Sleepover." "Work It" is a coming-of-age dance film, directed by Laura Terruso and produced by Alicia Keys, Leslie Morgenstein and Elysa Dutton. It stars Jordan Fisher, Sabrina Carpenter and Liza Koshy. "The Sleepover" is an action-comedy film directed by Trish Sie ("*Pitch*

Perfect 3") and produced by Mickey Liddell and Pete Shilaimon, starring Malin Akerman, Joe Manganiello and Sadie Stanley. Also, Franco completed the score for *"*Curious George: Go West, Go Wild" feature for Universal Animation.